THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No indigenously developed telemedicine field unit has been tested. However, Defence Research and Development Organisation has undertaken certain competence building tasks to acquire such a capability.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Relief for Ramagiri Goldmine Workers

4040 DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minsiter of MINES AND MINERALS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Ramagiri Goldmine Workers Union, Andhra Pradesh have requested to extend certain relief measures like exemption of payment of royalty to avoid closure of mines;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon; and

(c) the measures proposed/taken to rehabilitate the Goldmines in Ananthapur district of Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTERY OF MINES AND MINERALS DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA: (a) and (b) The Ramagiri Goldmine Workers Union, Andhra Pradesh had submitted a representation in June, 1998 to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh requesting for waiver by the State Government of royalty on gold ore mines in Andhra Pradesh by Bharat Gold Mine Limited (BGML) and subsidy on the power consumed by BGML. The Central governement had advised the State Government that the issues were to be addressed by the Goverment of Andhra Pradesh.

(c) As efforts to rehabilitate BGML including through the joint venture route were not successful the Goverment felt that revival of the Company was not feasible. The Government submitted to the Board for Industrial and Financial Restructuring (BIFR) that it would have no objection to winding up of the Company under the provisions of Sick Industrial Company (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 (SICA), and that the Government was ready to offer to all the employees on rolls of the Company as on 31st March, 1999 the benefit of the separation scheme on the lines of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) package approved for the Public Sector Enterprises of the Department of Heavy Industry. The Government has already offered, in December 1999 the benefit of Voluntary Retirement scheme (VRS) to all those employees of BGML who opt for the same by 31-3-2000.